

Chapter 7 Calcutta to Hong Kong

The *Rangoon* was a fine iron steamship, as fast as the *Mongolia* but not as comfortable. It was, though, only 3,500 miles from Calcutta to Hong Kong – which meant only eleven or twelve days at sea.

Aouda came to know Phileas Fogg much better, and told him how grateful she was to him for having saved her and for taking so much care of her. She told Mr Fogg the story of her life, and spoke about her uncles, who were rich traders, one in Bombay, and the other – whom she was going to join – in Hong Kong. Mr Fogg listened to her in what seemed to be a very cold and distant way, and showed no sign of any friendly feelings towards her. He treated her, of course, with the greatest politeness, but it was the politeness of a machine. He made sure that she had everything she needed for her comfort and came regularly to see her. If he did not talk much, he at least listened to her. Aouda found it difficult to understand his behaviour, but Passepartout explained to her something of his master's ways and habits. He told her, too, the reason for his journey round the world.

The weather was fine and the sea was calm, and the steamer made its way across the Bay of Bengal in the direction of Singapore.

The day before the *Rangoon* reached Singapore, Passepartout suddenly found himself face to face with Mr Fix.

'Mr Fix! What are you doing here? I thought you were in Bombay. Are you travelling round the world, too?'

'Oh, no!' answered Fix. 'I expect to stop at Hong Kong – at least for a few days.'

'But how is it that I haven't seen you on board between Calcutta and here?'

'Oh, I haven't been feeling very well and so stayed in my cabin. And how is your master, Mr Phileas Fogg?'

'He is quite well, thank you, and not a day late in his journey. Ah, Mr Fix; here is something you don't know. We have a young lady with us.'

'A young lady?' said Fix, who looked as if he had no idea what Passepartout meant.

Passepartout then told him the story. He told him about the adventure in Bombay, buying the elephant at the price of two thousand pounds, saving Aouda in the forest, and how they had been stopped at Calcutta.

Fix, who certainly knew the last part of the story, acted as if he knew nothing at all.

'But,' asked Fix, 'does your master mean to take this lady to Europe with him?'

'No, Mr Fix, no. We are simply going to leave her in the care of her uncle, a rich trader in Hong Kong.'

Fix was disappointed. He had thought that this business of the saving of Aouda would give him the chance to make fresh trouble for Mr Fogg at Hong Kong.

'May I offer you something to drink, Mr Passepartout?'

'Thank you; you may,' answered the Frenchman.

After this reunion, the detective and Passepartout met frequently. Fix did not try to get any more information out of his companion and only caught sight of Mr Fogg once or twice as he sat in the cabin talking to Aouda or playing cards.

Passepartout began to wonder very seriously about the strange chance that kept Fix with them. And it really was surprising. Here was this very kind gentleman, whom he met first at Suez, sailing on the *Mongolia*, getting off at Bombay where he was supposed to stay, then appearing on the *Rangoon* on his way to Hong Kong. In fact, here he was following Mr Fogg step by step. It was worth thinking about. It was most strange. Passepartout felt certain that Fix would leave Hong Kong at the same time as Mr Fogg, and probably by the same steamer.

If Passepartout had thought about the matter for a hundred years, he would never have guessed the real reason why his master was being followed. He would never have imagined that Mr Fogg was being chased round the world because he was believed to be a robber. But it is human nature to find an explanation for everything, and Passepartout found an explanation that seemed very reasonable. Fix, he felt sure, had been sent by the members of the Reform Club to see that the journey was carried out fairly and according to the agreement.

‘It must be that!’ he said to himself, proud at his cleverness. ‘He has been sent secretly to make sure that my master is not cheating. That is not right. Ah! Gentlemen of the Reform Club, you will be sorry for this!’

Pleased with his discovery, Passepartout made up his mind, all the same, to say nothing to his master about it, fearing that Mr Fogg’s feelings would be hurt by this distrust of his honesty. But he promised himself that he would play some tricks on Mr Fix.



On Wednesday afternoon, 30th October, the *Rangoon* passed through the narrow stretch of water which separates the island of Sumatra from the country of the Malays. Beautiful little islands, with their steep mountain sides, hid the view of Sumatra from the passengers.

At four o’clock the next morning the *Rangoon*, having arrived half a day earlier than usual, stopped at Singapore to take on more coal. Phileas Fogg marked this gain in his notebook and went on shore with Aouda, who wished to go for a short walk. Fix, distrusting every action of Fogg’s, followed him secretly. Passepartout was amused to see him doing this, and went on shore to buy some fresh food.

The island of Singapore is neither large nor particularly striking in appearance, since there are no mountains; it is not,

though, unattractive. After a pleasant drive of two hours among the woods and hills, Aouda and her companion returned to the town, and at ten o'clock went back on board the boat – followed by the detective, who had, of course, never lost sight of them. Passepartout was waiting for them on the *Rangoon*. He had been buying quantities of the fruits of the country, and offered some to Aouda, who was very grateful for them.

At eleven o'clock the *Rangoon*, having taken on more coal, steamed out of the port, and a few hours later the passengers could see no more of the high mountains and forests of Malacca.

Thirteen hundred miles separate Singapore from Hong Kong, a small British island lying off the coast of China. Phileas Fogg expected to spend no more than six days in getting there, so that he could take the boat that left Hong Kong on 6th November for Yokohama, one of the chief towns of Japan.

The weather, which had been fairly good up to then, changed when the moon entered its last quarter, and the sea became rough. At times there was a strong wind – and fortunately it blew from the south-east, the right direction for the ship. The captain often raised the sails, and with these and the steam the ship went forward at great speed past the coasts of Annam and Cochin China.

The ship still did not go fast enough to please Passepartout, since special care had to be taken in bad weather, which slowed them down. He felt angry with the captain, the engineer and the shipping company. Mr Fogg, on the other hand, showed no impatience or anxiety at all.

'You seem to be in a great hurry to get to Hong Kong,' said Mr Fix to Passepartout one day.

'Yes, in a great hurry,' answered Passepartout.

'You think that Mr Fogg is anxious to catch the boat to Yokohama?'

'Terribly anxious.'

'Then you believe in this journey round the world?'

'I do. Don't you, Mr Fix?'

'No, I don't!'

'You old devil!' answered Passepartout.

This answer made the detective wonder what he meant. He felt rather worried without quite knowing why. Had the Frenchman guessed who he was? He hardly knew what to think. Passepartout could not have guessed his secret, but what he said certainly meant something.

Another day Passepartout went even further. He could not help saying: 'When we get to Hong Kong, Mr Fix, I wonder whether we shall have the misfortune to leave you there?'

'Well,' answered Fix, not quite knowing what to say, 'I hardly know; perhaps...'

'Ah!' said Passepartout. 'If you come with us, I shall be very pleased. Come now! As you are a servant of the shipping company, you can hardly leave us during the journey, can you? First you were only going as far as Bombay, and now you will soon be in China! America isn't far, and from America to Europe is only a step!'

Fix looked carefully at Passepartout, on whose face there was a most pleasant smile, and decided to treat what he said as a joke. But Passepartout could not stop, and went on: 'Do you get much money for your sort of work?'

'Yes and no,' answered Fix. 'There are good times and bad. But of course I travel free.'

'Oh, I'm sure you do,' cried Passepartout with a laugh.

After this talk Fix went back to his cabin and began to think. Passepartout had certainly guessed who he was. In some way or other Passepartout had come to know that he was a detective. But had he told his master? What was Passepartout's part in this business? Was he himself one of the bank robbers? Did Passepartout and his master know everything? In that case he,

Fix, had lost the game.

Fix spent several hours worrying, sometimes believing that all was lost and sometimes hoping that Fogg knew nothing of the real state of things. He could not make up his mind how to act for the best.

In the end he decided he would speak openly to Passepartout if he could not manage to arrest Fogg at Hong Kong, and if Fogg was not going to stay on that island. He, Fix, would then tell Passepartout everything. Either the servant was one of the robbers or he was not. If he was, then Fix could not succeed; if he was not, then it would be in Passepartout's interest to help Fix to arrest Fogg.

That is how matters stood between those two men, but what about Fogg and Aouda? Passepartout could not make it out. She was clearly very grateful towards the Englishman, but what were Fogg's feelings towards her? He was certainly ready at all times to protect her, but he was equally certainly not in love with her. And Fogg did not seem to worry at all about his chances of winning or losing the bet; the one who worried continually was Passepartout.

One day he was watching the powerful engines.

'There isn't enough steam,' he cried. 'We are not moving! These Englishmen are afraid of using steam. Ah, if this were an American ship, the engines would perhaps blow up, but we would move faster!'



During the last days of this journey the weather was terrible. The wind blew harder and harder from the north-west – which was the wrong direction. The ship rolled in the rough sea, and the passengers were very uncomfortable.

On 3rd and 4th November the sea was rougher still, and progress was even slower. If the wind did not drop, the ship would

be at least twenty hours late. Then it would be too late to catch the steamer to Yokohama. But Phileas Fogg did not seem to be at all worried.

Fix was very pleased. If the *Rangoon* reached Hong Kong after the Yokohama steamer had left, Fogg would have to stay on the island for a few days. So he welcomed the grey sky and the winds. He was rather seasick, it is true, but that did not matter.

But the impatience of Passepartout can easily be imagined. It was impossible for him to stay below. He climbed up the masts and helped with the sails. He jumped from rope to rope and amused the sailors by his acrobatic tricks. He questioned the captain, the officers and the sailors, who could not help laughing at his anxiety. He wanted to know exactly how long the bad weather would last.

Finally the wind died down and blew from the right direction. During the day of 5th November the sea grew calmer. Passepartout grew calmer too, as the ship increased its speed.

But it was impossible to make up for the lost time. There was nothing to be done, and land was not seen until the 6th, at five o'clock in the morning. Phileas Fogg had expected to reach Hong Kong on the 5th. He was twenty-four hours late. He would certainly not be able to catch the steamer for Yokohama.

At six o'clock the pilot came on board the *Rangoon* to help guide the ship into port. Passepartout was most anxious to go and ask him whether the Yokohama steamer had left. But he dared not do so, preferring to hold onto his hopes until the last moment. He had spoken about his fears to Fix, who had tried to comfort him.

'There is nothing to worry about,' he said. 'If your master does not catch the boat for Yokohama, he only has to take the next one.'

This answer had made Passepartout angry.

But if Passepartout dared not question the pilot, Mr Fogg did.

He asked when the next boat would leave Hong Kong for Yokohama.

'Tomorrow morning,' answered the pilot.

'Ah,' said Mr Fogg, without showing any surprise.

Passepartout heard these words, and wanted to throw his arms lovingly round the pilot's neck. Fix heard the answer, too, but he would have preferred to break the pilot's neck.

'What is the name of the steamer?' asked Mr Fogg.

'The *Carnatic*,' answered the pilot.

'But wasn't the *Carnatic* to leave yesterday?'

'Yes, sir, but one of its boilers had to be repaired, and so the boat will not sail until tomorrow.'

'Thank you,' answered Mr Fogg, and went down below.

Passepartout took the pilot's hand and shook it with violence, saying, 'You are a lovely man!'

The pilot probably never knew why Passepartout was so pleased with him; he went calmly on with his duties.

At one o'clock the *Rangoon* tied up, and the passengers landed. It must be said that Phileas Fogg had been extremely fortunate. Without the necessary repair to its boiler, the *Carnatic* would have left Hong Kong the day before, and passengers for Japan would have had to wait a week for the next ship. Mr Fogg was twenty-four hours late, but this would not be a very serious matter. The steamer from Yokohama to San Francisco would have to wait for the *Carnatic* since it connected with the Hong Kong boat, but no doubt it would be easy to make up for the twenty-four hours during the crossing of the Pacific.